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from the words—*ex vi terminorum*: so that it is not fair to represent it as figurative. The word "is" has not been used simply for "represent;" the latter would not convey the whole meaning, nor could our views have been expressed—consistently with the Jewish notions of the times—in any other words but those which inspiration has here employed.

In the sacrifice of the Passover the one victim was slain for the entire household; none participated in its benefits who did not partake of the flesh; to eat it was the mark of those who joined in it. The passage in the sixth chapter of St. John, does not refer to the Eucharist; but as both passages relate to the offering up of our Lord's body and blood upon the cross, both have parallel expressions of harmonious import. Except we eat of the great victim, except we participate in the great atoning sacrifice, we have no life. In this sense the Eucharist is—not represents—what St. Paul declares it to be, our "participation in the body and blood of Christ" (1st). But this branch of my argument cannot be more than suggested, without trenching unreasonably on your space.

FONTIUM PETITOR.

ON AURICULAR CONFESSION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—Having read, in your February number of the CATHOLIC LAYMAN, what you have quoted from the "Touchstone," and your reply concerning private confession, you appear to me to think that no such practice existed in the Apostolic age; and I believe, from what I have seen of your research, that you are a competent person to tell when and where the practice begun, &c.

I, though a member of the Roman Catholic Church, would be anxious to ascertain the truth, and would, therefore, feel greatly pleased and truly thankful if you would give your readers a historical specimen of the whole matter.

I have seen a statement made in a catechism, written by the Rev. E. Norman, Rector of Brosna, relative to Auricular Confession, which is as follows:—

"Q. When was auricular or whispering confession introduced?"

"A. In the year 1215, at the fourth Lateran Council it was commanded as an ecclesiastical constitution, but not made necessary to salvation till the Council of Trent, about 1546."

But I am of the opinion that it was in existence long before that; for I remember to have read in a Protestant author—Bishop Burnet's "Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles," p. 363—as follows:—"Penitents were enjoined to publish such of their secret sins as the penitentiary priest did prescribe. This happened to give great scandal at Constantinople, when Nectarius was bishop there, in the fourth century."

Again, I have read, from Bishop Challoner's "Catholic Christian Instructed," p. 99, edition 13, Dublin. Speaking of Confession, he says—"We conclude with St. Augustine, that to pretend it is enough to confess to God alone, is making void the power of the keys given to the Church," &c. In proof of this, a reference is made to Homil. 49, into alios. 50.

From these testimonies I have some reason to believe that private confession is of very early standing, &c.

I sincerely hope you will do me the kindness of inserting these few lines, &c.

I am, &c., yours truly,

A NORTHERN READER.

[Our correspondent will perceive that we have commenced the subject of confession in our present number, but have been obliged to postpone the historical part of it till our next, in which we hope to give him the information he very reasonably requires.—ED.]

ON JAMES V. 14, 15.

SIR—Permit me to express a different opinion from you on the interpretation of the text—James v. 14, 15—given in a paper headed the "Touchstone," in the February No. of the CATHOLIC LAYMAN, page 20, objection 36.

I shall first quote the text in full, then quote the interpretation you have given, next advance reasons which compel me to dissent from this, and afterwards propose a paraphrase expressing my own view.

"Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

The interpretation given is—"The gift of miraculously healing the sick, which is evidently what the Apostle is speaking of."

The following are some of my objections to this interpretation:—

1. It does not appear to me that gifts of healing were ever possessed generally by the Church to the extent which this interpretation supposes. It would imply that in every congregation, in every possible illness, of every individual, a miracle might be expected. The Apostles themselves do not appear to have possessed

this power (2 Tim. iv. 20), where the Apostle Paul says he left Trophimus sick at Miletus.

2. It appears strange that if such a power existed in any individuals of each congregation that it should be necessary to tell them to apply for the exercise of such a gift. The people themselves must know it, and would be ready enough to use it.

3. It would appear from 1 Cor. xii. 9, 28, 30 and from ecclesiastical history (if dependence can be placed on it in this respect), that the gift of healing did not always reside in the ministers of the Church; but that laymen, and even women, possessed this power. It seems strange that these should not be alluded to.

4. The constant use of prayer, as the means of working the miracles spoken of, seems contrary to the general manner of God's dealing in this matter. The majority of miracles appear to have been suggested by Divine impulse. See among other places Acts xiv. 8; the use of prayer seems the exception.

5. The same argument may be applied to the use of oil. There is no instance after the ascension where oil was used.

6. The precept under consideration comes in among a number of precepts obligatory on the Church to the present day. It seems strange that one precept, the use of which was very shortly to cease, should be introduced among them.

These reasons render it impossible for me to receive the interpretation proposed in the LAYMAN, though it corresponds with that proposed by all the interpreters I can recollect, including Poole, who, however, hints another.

I, therefore, venture to suggest another—premising that though the style of St. James is very abrupt, and the transitions from one subject to another very rapid; yet that frequently we are able to discover a connection, or at least imagine the connection, in the mind of the Apostle. In this respect the Epistle is similar to the Book of Ecclesiastes. The connecting link in the mind of the Apostle in this case appears to be—"Let a spirit of true religion, or a recollection of God as the providential ruler of the world, influence you under all dispensations." (I commence the paraphrase at verse 13.)—"Therefore) is any afflicted (in mind or estate) let him pray (to the author of the affliction). Is any (prosperous, and therefore inclined to be) merry? let him sing psalms (and thus acknowledge God as the Author of his prosperity). Is any sick among you (and therefore more especially under the hand of God, let him acknowledge God more especially, and to do this) let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over (for*) him, (making use of the best means of cure, such as) anointing him with oil, (not with Jewish incantations, but) in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall (frequently) save the sick, and the Lord (by his blessing on the means used, or providential circumstance) shall raise him up; and if (the sickness has been sent, not merely as a trial of his faith, but because) he has committed (some particular) sins (1 Cor. xi. 30), they shall be forgiven him, (and his being raised up when this event does take place may be accepted as an evidence of God's forgiveness)."

The above paraphrase is somewhat long, but I have made it so in order to leave no doubt as to the meaning I endeavour to convey. I was anxious, also, to use every word of the Authorized Version, and I have only in this respect made the alteration of the subjunctive into the indicative mood. I don't think it at all necessary to suppose that the elders were the persons who anointed, though the construction might seem to imply that. That might be the act of any individual connected with the sick man. Prayer was the especial duty of the elders.

If you cannot adopt this interpretation I hope you will at least excuse my sending it to you. This is the explanation I always give my own congregation, and I generally follow it up by some observations on the propriety of sending for a clergyman in case of illness, and not waiting till the last moment.

Yours, &c.,

J. M.

We freely lay the foregoing before our readers, and think it well deserving of attention. The passage cannot be deemed free from difficulty, and the most clear thing in it is, that it does not refer to *Extreme Unction*, as contended for by the author of the Touchstone, for the simple reason we have already given, p. 20. Roman Catholic priests administer *Extreme Unction* without any hope of being able to "raise up" the sick man; and, indeed, only when they believe him to be past recovery.—ED.

ON LADY DAY AND GOOD FRIDAY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—I'm entirely astray about Lady-day. I'm a poor man that doesn't know much, but I gets your newspaper (thanks be to them that sends it to me), and maybe you would ease my mind, for sure you know more about our religion than I do. Your honour knows that Lady-day always comes on the 25th of March, and it's the greatest holiday we have at all; there's nothing

a man can do worse nor to work upon it. Stealing is nothing to it; why, its worse even than eating meat on a Friday.

Well, your honour, Good Friday is no day with us at all; we never were asked to go to mass, and we may work, or amuse ourselves, or do any idling the boys please.

Well, they say it's the day that our Blessed Saviour was crucified for us; and, indeed, many's the time it seemed strange to me, that we wouldn't be asked to say our prayers that day. But now it seems worse entirely; for this year Lady-day and Good Friday come on us altogether, just on the one day; and it's the great day for religion and mass, is Lady-day; and it comes about, that just because it's the day that our Saviour died for us there's no mass nor prayers at all, not on Lady-day itself. For sure we had no mass, and everybody was labouring or diverting themselves this Lady-day, just as if it was a common day; and a farmer beside me, that's cousin to the priest, had all the men in this side of the country setting his praties, just as if it wasn't Lady-day at all; and that's just what he would be read out in chapel for doing any other Lady-day that ever come. And all because it's the same day, too, that our Saviour died for our sins! Well, now I want to know, when the Blessed Virgin was standing by the cross and watching him at his death, didn't she pray at all? And would she tell us that we musn't pray on that day? And the blessed Apostles, and the holy women that was looking on, didn't they pray? And why wouldn't we pray on that day now? Why, if Lady-day was ever so good a day for religion, how could it be spoiled entirely by being the same day that Jesus Christ died for our sins? and why would we have no religion at all on that day more nor any other day?

Your honour's obedient servant,

PETER BRANNIGAN of Meath.

We have heard of this strange fact already, but we are rather at a loss to explain it or account for it. We do not suppose that the priests wish to prevent people from praying on Good Friday; but why do they refuse them public service just because it is Good Friday? We have just heard that there is a rule that they may not celebrate mass on Good Friday—a very strange rule, if true. We would be glad if any of our readers could tell us if there be such a rule, and, if so, if they could give us any authorities to show how old this rule is.

But even if there can be no mass, why should there not be public prayers on such a day? But we forgot—the prayers are in Latin, and the priests may think that when there is no mass, it can hardly be worth while to bring the people to the prayers that they cannot understand. Alas! for the ancient Church!

FARMING OPERATIONS FOR APRIL.

(From the Irish Farmers' Gazette.)

FROM the unusually great inclemency of the weather, farming operations of every description have been so much retarded as to increase the labour and render the next few months a time of anxious care and thought to the farmer, and require considerable exertions in pushing on the general routine work, to make up for lost time; at the same time, we would recommend the exercise of the utmost care and caution, and rather do the work well and carefully than do it ill and hurriedly; for though early sowing is much to be encouraged, still it will be better to wait a few days (which may be confidently done) for weather to dry the land sufficiently to enable the harrows to work freely to get in and cover the spring corn, than to do so while the land is wet and poachy; and the same remarks are applicable in the preparation of the land for green crops, which cannot be pulverized as it should be if the land be not sufficiently dry to permit the harrows and grubbers to work freely.

Oats sowing should be proceeded with as the state of the weather and land will be found dry enough. In the poorer class of soils it will be necessary to increase the quantity of seed as the season advances.

Barley.—During this and the beginning of next month is the proper time for sowing spring barley. This species of grain delights in a well-pulverized and sharp, yet rich, soil. Its place in the rotation, like all other grain crops, is after green crops (turnips, &c.) Very often, however, we find the wheat or oat stubble set apart for barley, particularly the former, which in all likelihood, had also followed a grain crop, but matured on the stubble. This is very bad farming, and no one who wishes to keep his land in good order, or to reap the greatest amount of produce which it is capable of producing, will pursue such a practice. When barley is to be sown after potatoes, or such green crops as are raised at the end of the year, the land must receive a winter ploughing, clearing out all the furrows, to prevent water from lodging, and in spring let it be cross-ploughed: after this, harrow and then plough the seed-furrow. This treatment, if the ploughing has been sufficiently deep, will bring the land into a finely-pulverized state, and the crop will be stronger and more equal than if ploughed with only one furrow.

Top-dress wheat and other grain crops and meadow lands with guano, soot, superphosphate of lime, &c., in wet weather, or on the approach of rain.

(1) 1 Cor. x. 16.—*κοινωνία του αμαρτος*.

* *ἐπι* With an accusative admits this meaning.— Luke xxiii. 28.